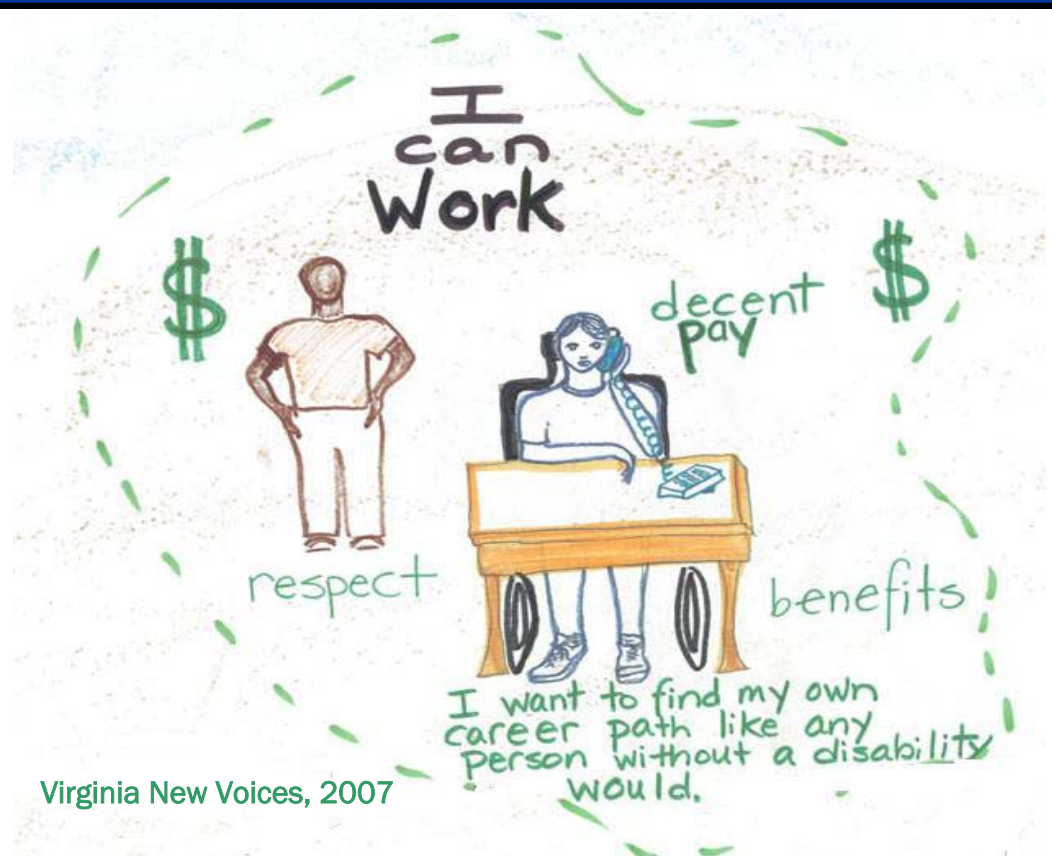


The good news:***Did you know?***

- Self-advocates are hard working, reliable and dedicated employees.
- Many self-advocates own and run their own businesses.



- Experts say the number of self-advocates with real jobs is growing.
- Schools can develop transition plans for students that include paid work experience before graduation.
- Some programs can help self-advocates go to college.
- Vermont closed its last sheltered workshop in 2002.
- Working with people with disabilities makes co-workers feel good.
- The Social Security Administration offers incentives to help people with disabilities keep their benefits when they get work.
- Employers can get a break on their taxes if they hire people with disabilities.



Self-advocates want real jobs

Dayna has Cerebral Palsy. She was laid off from her office job where she had worked for seven years. She wants another job in the community, but her Vocational Rehabilitation worker doesn't believe she can be successful in a competitive market.

"They want to put me in a workshop instead!"

Self-advocates are tired of being offered "jobs" in workshops. "We want to be out there like everyone else working at a real job and making real money," says Ricky, a self-advocate from Texas.

With the right support and creative planning around interests and dreams, people with disabilities can work in the community:

Luke lived in an institution and spent 10 years in a workshop.

Supported employment services helped him to get a job at a grocery store. Now he owns a vending machine business.

Pam is self-employed as an artist and advocate. She also works part-time at Target. She spent most of her life in an institution before getting out and receiving support to create her dream job.

Robert used a Social Security PASS plan to buy equipment for his business. Now he owns a laundry business sterilizing towels for hair salons.

Cheryl loves to read. She turned this interest into a business. She owns a small book store in a coffee shop.

We can work in competitive jobs—we just need good support.